"How dare you, monsieur!" she panted. "Go at once, or I shalf call ald!"

So I went into the passage. But befor I reached the end of the little hall Jacqueline came running back to me. "Monsieur!" she gasped. "M. Paul!



Chought you, I do not want you to be een. You are in dreadful danger. Come back!"

"No, Mme. d'Epernay," I answered, and she winced again, as though I had struck her across the face.

"For my sake," she plended, catching at my arm, and at that moment I heard a door slam underneath and heavy footsteps begin slowly to ascend the stairs.

"No. madame," I answered, trying to release my arm from her clasp. "Then for the sake of-our love,

Paul I" she gasped. I suffered her to lead me back into the room. As she drew me back and

closed the door behind us I heard the footsteps pause and turn along the I knew that heavy guit as we

though I already saw Leroux's hard face before my eyes. The room was completely dark. I

heard Leroux tramp in and his voice

mingling with the click-click of the ball in the rouette wheel, "Who is here?" he demanded. "I am," answered Jacqueline. "Maudit!" he burst out explosively.

"Where is d'Epernay? I am tired of waiting for him!" "I have told you many times that

I do not know," answered Jacqueline. "How long will you keep up this pretense, madame?" cried Leroux angrily. "What have you to gain by concealing the knowledge of your husband

from me?" "M. Leroux, why will you not be-Heve that I remember nothing?" answered Jacqueline. "After my father had turned M. Louis d'Epernay out of his home, whither he had come to beg money to pay his gambling debts, you brought him back. You made my father take him back in. He wanted to marry me. But I refused, because I had no love for him. But you insisted I should marry him, because he had gained you the entrance to the seignlory and helped you to acquire your power over my father."

"Go on," growled Leroux, biting his lips. "Perhaps I shall learn something."

"Nothing that you do not already know, monsteur," she flashed out with spirit. "My father came here, long ago, a political fugitive, in danger of death. You knew this, and you played upon his fears. You drained him of his last penny, and then offered him ten thousand dollars to gamble with in Quebec, telling him of the delights of the city and promising him immualty," the girl went on remorselessly. "And for this he was to assign his property to Louis, thinking, of course, that he could soon make his fortune ent the tables. And Louis was to marry ime, and in turn sell the seignlory to you. And so I married Louis under threat of death to my father.

"Oh, yes, monsteur, the plan was atmple and well devised. And I knew nothing of it. But Louis d'Epernay blurted it all out to me upon our wedding night. I think the shame of knowing that I had been sold to him unhinged my mind, for I ran out into

"Now you know all, monsieur, for I remember nothing more until I found self traveling back with M. Howflett in the sleigh. You say I was in New York. Well, I do not remem-

he claims me as his wife!"

And then I had the measure of Leroux. He laughed and he beat down her scorn with scorn.

"You have underestimated your price, madame." be sneered. "Since you have learned so much I will tell you more. You have cost me twenty thousand dollars, and not ten; for besides the ten thousand paid to your father Louis got ten thousand also upon the signing of the marriage contract. So swallow that, and be proud of being priced so high! And the seigniory is already his, and I am waiting for him to return and sell me the ground rights for twenty-five thousand more, and if I know Louis d'Epernay he will not wait very long to get his fingers round it."

"Listen to me, Simon Leroux," said Inequeline, standing up before him, as

indomitable in spirit as he. "All your plots and schemes mean nothing to me. My only aim is to take my father away from here, from you and M. d'Epernay, and let you wrangle over your spoil. There are more than fourlegged wolves, M. Leroux; there are human ones, and, like the others, when food is scarce they prey upon each other."

"Pardieu, I like your spirit!" exclaimed Simon, staring at her with

And Jacqueline's head dropped then. Unwittingly Simon had pierced her defenses.

But he never knew, for before he had time to know the graybeard rose upon his feet and rubbed his thin hands together, chuckling.

"Never mind your money, Simon," he said. "I'm going to be ficher than any of you. Do you know what I did with that ten thousand? I gave it to my little daughter, and she has gone to New York to make our fortunes at Mr. Daly's gaming house. No, there she is!" he suddenly exclaimed. "She has come back!"

Leroux wheeled round and looked from ope to the other.

"Diable! So that was the purpose of your visit to New York?" he asked the girl. "So-you have not quite forgotten that, madame! Where is the money?"

Jacqueline's lips quivered. I saw her glance involuntarily toward the door behind which I was standing. And suddenly the last phase of the

problem became clear to me. Jacqueline thought I had robbed her. I stepped from behind the door and faced Leroux. "I have that money,"

I said curtly. I saw his face turn white. He staggered back, and then, with a bull's bellow, rushed at me, his heavy fists

But he stopped short when he saw my automatic pistol pointing at his chest. And he saw in my face that I

was ready to shoot to kill. "You thief-you spy-you treacherous hound, I'll murder you!" he roared.

The dotard, who had been looking at me, came forward.

"No, no, I won't have him murdered, Simon," he protested, laying a trembling hand on Leroux's shoulder. "He has almost as good a roulette system as I have."

## CHAPTER XIV.

## Won-and Lost.

We must have stood confronting each other for fully a minute. Then Leroux dropped his hands and smiled sourly at me.

"You seem-temporarily-to have the advantage of me, M. Hewlett," he said. "I respect your pertinacity, and now at last I am content in having discovered the motive of your enterprise. I thought you were hired by Carson. If you had been frank with me we might have come to an understanding long ago.

"You may leave us. Mme. d'Enernay," he said to Jacqueline, "No doubt your absence will spare your feelings, for we are going to be frank in our speech."

"I thank you for your consideration, M. Leroux," replied Jacqueline, and walked quietly out of the room. Leroux sat down heavily.

"I will put down my cards," he said, "I have you here in my power. I have four men with me. This dotard"-he glanced contemptuously at old Duchaine-"has no bearing on the situation. You can, of course, kill me; but that would not belp you. Where is Louis d'Epernay?"

"I have never seen the man," I re-

Lerr x glanced incredulously at me. "I don't know why you are lying to me," he said. "It is not to your advantage. You must have known that she was in New York; Louis must have told Carson, and he must have told you. And Louis must have told you the secret of the entrance, un-

"Listen to me!" I cried furiously, "I will not be badgered with any more questions. I have told you the truth. met Mme. d'Epernay by accident, and I escorted her toward the chateau and followed her after you kidnaped her, to protect her from you."

He scowled at me feroclously, and then he began studying my face. I returned stare for stare. Finally he banged his big fist down upon the

"Well, it doesn't matter," he said, "because whatever your purpose you cannot do any harm. And you understand that she is a married woman, So you will, no doubt, agree to take

your money and depart?" "I shall go if she tells me to go," I suswered; but even while I spoke mg heart sank, for I had little hope.

"I will bring her back an hear the decision from he

He left the room, and I sat there lone beside the dotard, listening to the cilck of the ball and the chink of the coins and the roar of the twin

There had been a sinister smooth-ness in Leroux's latest mood. I did not trust the man, for all his blunt-ness. I suspected something, and I did not intend to relax my guard. Leroux came back with Jacqueline before I could decide.

"If you bid him, madame, M. Hewlett is willing to take his departure," said Leroux to her. "Is it your wish that he remain or go?"

"Oh, I want you to go, monsieur," said Jacqueline, clasping her hands pleadingly.

"Are ou saying this of your own free will, Jacqueline?" I cried. She nodded, and I saw Simon's evil

face creased with suppressed mirth. I rose up. "Adleu, then, madame," I said. "But first permit me to restore the money that I have been keeping for you." And I took out my pocket-

Simon looked at me incredulously. "I do not understand you in the least now, M. Hewlett," he exclaimed. "You are to keep the money. I do not go back upon my bargains."

"It is not, however, your money," I reforted, though I knew that it soon would be. Naturally I do not carry



eight thousand dollars about with me. I shall give you a check-" Leroux burst into loud laughter and

clapped me heartily upon the shoulder. "Paul Hewlett." he said with genuine admiration, "you are good as a play. Well, let us take your check, and it shall be accepted in full settlement." He winked at me and thrust his tongue into his cheek.

I was too sick at heart to pay attention to his buffoonery. I sat down at the table and, taking up a pen which lay there, wrote a check for eight thousand dollars, making it out to Jacqueline d'Epernay. This I handed to her. "Adieu, madame," I said...

"Adlen, monsieur," she answered al-

most inaudibly, her head bent low.

I went out of the room, still gripping my pistol, and I took care to let Simon see it as we descended the stairs side by side. The noisy laughter in the ballroom had ceased, but I heard Raoul and Jean Petitjean quarreling, and their thick voices told me that they were in no condition to aid their master. Then there was only Leroux and

Philippe Lacroix to deal with. I could have saved the situation. What a fool I had been! What an

irresolute fool! I never learned. As we reached the bottom of the stairs Philippe Lacroix came out of the ballroom carrying a candle. I saw

his melancholy, pale face twist with surprise as he perceived me. "Philippe, this is M. Paul Hewlett." said Leronx. "Tomorrow you will convey him to the cabin of Pere Antoine, where he will be able to make his own

"Now, M. Hewlett, I shall show you your sleeping quarters for tonight," Leroux continued to me, and conduct ed me out into the fenced yard.

plans. You will go by way of le Viell

Two sleighs were standing before the buts. Leroux led me past them and knocked at the door of the largest cabin.

"Pierre Caribou!" he shouted. He was facing the door and did not see what I saw at the little window on the other side. I saw the face of the old Indian, distorted with a grimace of fury as he eyed Leroux.

Next moment he stood cringing before him, his features a mask. Looking in I saw a huge stove which nearly filled the interior, and seated beside it the middle-aged squaw.

"This gentleman will sleep here tonight," said Leroux curtly. "In the moraing at sunriso harness a sleigh for him and M. Lacroix. Adleu, M. Hewlett," he continued, turning to me. "And be sure your check will never be presented."

There was something so sinister in his manner that again I felt that thrill of fear which he seemed able to inspire in me.

I went in with Pierre Caribou, and the squaw glided out of the cabin. There were two couches of the kind they used to call ottomans inside, which had evidently once formed part I the chaican faraighings, for their

aplender accorded III

I looked at my watch. I had thought it must be midnight, and it was only eight. Within three bours I had won Jacqueline and lost her forever. With Leroux in my power I had yielded and gone away.

And on the morrow I should arrive at Pere Antoine's but just when he

expected me. Surely the mockery of fate could go no further!

## CHAPTER XV.

The Old Angel.

Presently the Indian touched me on the shoulder and I looked up. He had a plateful of steaming stew in his hands, and set it down beside me.

"Eat!" he said in English. I was too dispirited and dejected to obey him at first. But soon I managed to fall to, and I was surprised to discover how ravenous I was, 1

had eaten hardly anything for days. and only a few mouthfuls since morning.

The Indian drew the stool near me and sat down, "You meet Mile. Jacqueline in New York?" he asked.

"I brought her back," I answered. "I know," the Indian answered. meet Simon; drive him from St. Boniface to chateau. I take Ma'm'selle Jacqueline to St. Boniface when she run 'way. Simon not here then or I be 'fraid. Simon bad man; d- bad. He give my gal to Jean Petitjean. My gal good gal till Simon give her to Jean Petitiean. Simon d- bad man. Me kill him one day."

I saw a glimmer of hope now, though of what I hardly knew; or perhaps it was only the desire to talk of Jacqueline and hear her name upon my lips and Pierre's.

"Pierre, I came here to save Mile.
Jacqueline," I said.

"No can save him," he answered. "No can fight against Simon."

"What, in the devil's name, is his

power, then?" I cried. "Le diable," he replied. He may have misunderstood me, but the answer was apt. "No use fight him," he said. "All finish now. Old times, himfinish, and my gal, too. Soon Pierre Caribou, him finish. No can fight Simon. Perhaps old Pierre kill him. nobody else." He looked stendily at me. "I poison him dogs," he added.

"What?" I exclaimed. "Simon, him tell me long ago nobody come to chateau. So you finish, too, maybe. What he tell you, you

"Lacroix is going to take me to Pere Antoine's cabin tomorrow morning." The Indian grunted. "Simon no mean to let you go," he said. "He mean kill you. You know too much. Sometime he kill me, too, or I kill

"Pierre." I said, taking him by the arm, "what is the Old Angel-le Vieil Ange?"

He stared stolldly at me. "Why you ask that?" he said. "Because Lacroix has been instructed to take me by that route," I an-

Pierre shook the ashes out of his pipe and rose. "Come with me," he said. "I show you-because you frien' of Ma'm'selle Jacqueline. Come."

I followed him out of the but. A large moon was just rising out of the east but it was not yet high enough to cast much light.

We traversed perhaps a mile of outer blackness. Then I began to see a gleam of moonlight in front of me, and though I had not been conscious of any turn I discovered that we must have retraced our course completely, for I heard the roar of the sataracts again.

Then we emerged upon a tiny shelf of rock some forty feet up the face of the wall and quite invisible from below. It was a little above the level of the chateau roof, about a hundred yards away. Below me I could see the main entrance to the tunnel.

We had a foothold of about ten feet on the level platform, which was allppery with smooth black ice, and thundering over us, so near that I could almost have touched it had I stretched out my hand, the whirling torrent plunged into that hell below.

Plerre caught my arm as I reeled, sick with the shock of the discovery, and yelled into my ear above the din. "Le Vieil Ange!" he cried, "This, way Simon mean you to go tomorrow. Lacroix him tell. you: 'Get down, we find the road.' He take you up here and push you-so."

He made a graphic gesture with his arm and pointed. I looked down, shuddering, into the black, foamcrested water, bubbling and whirling among the grotesque ice pillars that stood like sentries upon the brink.

"What you do?" he asked. "You go to Pere Antoine tonight? What you

do now?" I took the pistol from my cont

pocket. "Plerre," I answered, "I have two bullets here and both of them are for Simon. Tonight I had him in my power and spared him. Now I am going back and I shall shoot him down like a dog, whether he is armed or defenseless,"

Pierre's face was twitching. "You no go back !" he cried. "Simon he kill you. No use to fight Simon, Him time not come yet. When him time come he die."

"When will it come?" I asked, looking at the man's features, which were distorted with frenzied hate.

"I not know!" exclaimed Pierre. try find-cards tell me. No Indian man in this part country remember how tell me. In old days many could tell. Now I wait. When his time come old Indian know. He kill Simon then himself. Nobody else kill Simon. No use you try."

I shook the Indian's hands away and plunged forward into the tunnel again.
I heard him calling after me; but I think he saw that I was not to be deterred, for he made no attempt to

And so I went on and on through the darkness and with each step toward the chateau my resolution

My elbow grated against the tunn wall. I stepped sidewise toward to center and ran against the wall opposite. The light of the stars was clear in front of me and the cold wind blew upon my face, and I squeezed through into the same scooped-out hollow which I had entered on the same afternoon during the course of my journey toward the chateau.

The little river gurgled at my feet, and in front of me I saw a candle flickering in the recesses of a cave, so elfinlike that I could distinguish it only by shielding my eyes against the moon and stars.

I grasped my pistol tightly and crept lessly forward. If this should be Leroux, as I was convinced it was, I would not parley with him. I would shoot him down in his tracks.

As I stepped nearer him my feet dislodged a pebble, which rolled with a splash into the bed of the stream. The man started and spun around,



I Saw Before Me the Features of Philippe Lacroix.

and I saw before me the pale, melancholy features of Philippe Lacrolx.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Louis d'Epernay.

He attered an oath and took two steps backward, but I saw that he was unarmed and that he realized his helplessness. He flung his hands above his head and stood facing me, surprise and terror twisting his features into a grimacing grin.

"I have something of importance to say to you, monsieur," he began. "I can believe that," I answered.

is about le Viell Ange, is it not?" "By God, I did not mean-I swear to you, monsieur-listen, monsieur, one moment only," he stammered,

"Lower your pistol. You see that I am unarmed!" I lowered it. "Well, say what you have to say," I said to him.

"Leroux is a devil!" he burst out. with no pretended passion. "I want you to help me, M. Hewlett, and I can help you in a way you do not dream of. M. Hewlett, how much do you think this seigniory is worth?" "Some half a million dollars, per-

haps." He came close to me and hissed into my ear: "Monsieur, there is more gold in these rocks than anywhere in the

world! Look here! Here!" He stooped down and began tossing pebbles at my feet. But they were pebbles of pure gold and each one of them was as large as the first joint of my thumb. And I had misjudged his courage, I think, for it was avarice and not fear that made him tremble.

"It is everywhere, monsieur!" cried Lagroix. "In this stream, in these hills, too. You can gather a mortarful of earth anywhere and it will show color when it is washed. We found this place together-"

"You and Leroux?"

with furtive cunning.

"No! I and-" He broke off suddenly and eyed me

"Yes, yes, monsieur, Leroux and I. And we two worked here together, with nothing more than picks and shovels and mortars and pestles, Leroux and L. There was nobody clse. It is the richest gold deposit in the world, M. Hewlett, and neither Raoul nor Jean Petitjean knows the secretonly Leroux and L. One cannot light upon this place save by a miracle of chance, such as brought you here. God

did not mean it to be found," I grasped him by the shoulder. "Do you see what this means?" I shouted. "It means a glorious life!" he cried. "All the wealth in the world-"

put this treasure in these hills, and he

"No, it means death!" I answered. "It means that if Leroux succeeds in killing me he will kill you too! Do you suppose that he will share his hoard with you?"

"No, M. Hewlett," answered Lacrolx quietly. "And that is precisely what I wanted to say to you. You are not a hog like Leroux; I can trust you. Come with me, monsieur. I don't know how you got into the wrong passage, but it is simple straight ahead. Come

with me! I will precede you.

I followed him into the darkness, and very soon heard the sound of the cataract again. And then once more I was standing at the tunnel entrance -and the chateau was before me.

I strode steadily across the snow and opened the door in the dark wing. entered the hall and ascended the stairway, took the turn to the right and passed through the little hall. I heard Leroux's harsh voice within, and if I stopped outside it was not in indicaion but because I meant to make sure of many this time.

"I want you, Jacqueline," I heard him say in a voice which betrayed no throb of passion. "And I am going to have you. I always have my way. I am not like that weak fool Hewlett."

"It was I sent him away, not you." she cried. Do you think he was afraid of you?"

"You are a splendid woman Jacqueline," he said. "I like the way you defy me-by heaven, I do! But you are quite at my mercy. And you are going to yield! You will yield your will to mine-"

"Never!" she cried. myself into the lake before to. happen. Ah, monsieur"-her voice took on a pleading tone-"why will you not take all we have and let us go? We are two helpless people; we shall never betray your secrets. Why must you have me too?"

"Because I love you, Jacqueline," he cried, and now I heard an undertone of passion which I had not suspected in the man. He caught her in his arms. She uttered a little gasping cry and struggled

wildly and ineffectually in his grasp. I was quite cold, for I knew that was to be the last of his villainles. I intered the room and walked up to the table, my pistol raised, aiming at his heart, and I felt my own heart beat steadily and the will to kill rise dominant above every hesitation.

Leroux spun round. He saw me, and he smiled his sour smile. He did not flinch, although he must have seen that my hand was as steady as a rock. "What, you again, monsieur?" he

asked mockingly. "You have come back? You are always coming back. aren't you?" / "I have come back to kill you, Leroux," I answered, and pulled the trig-

ger six times. And each time I heard nothing but the click of the hammer.

Then, with his bull's bellow, Simon was upon me, dashing his fists into my face and bearing me down. My puny struggles were as ineffective as though I had been fighting ten men. He had me on the floor and was kneeling on my chest, and in a trice the other ruffians had come dashing along the hall.

Jacqueline was beating with her little fists upon Leroux's broad back. but he did not even feel the blows. I heard old Charles Duchaine's piping cries of fear, and then somebody held me by the throat and I was swimming in black water,

"Bring a rope, Raoul!" I heard Simon call.

Half conscious, I knew that I was being tied. I felt the rope tighten upon my wrists and limbs; presently I opened my aching eyes to find myself trussed like a chicken to two legs of the table and Leroux was standing over me, perfectly calm.

"Ah, Paul Hewlett, you are a very poor conspirator indeed," he said, "to try to shoot a man without anything in your pistol. Do you remember how affectionately I put my arm round you when you were sitting in that chair writing your ridiculous check? It was then that I took the liberty of extracting the two cartridges. But I did think you would have sense enough to examine your pistol and reload before you returned."

He picked up a scrap of newspaper from the table and held it before my eyes, deliberately turning up the oillamp wick that I might read it. I recognized it at once. It was the clipping from the newspaper, descriptive of the murdered man, which I had cut out in the train and placed in my pocketbook. "You dropped this, my friend, when

Simon. "You are a very poor conspirator, Paul Hewlett, Well?" Well?" I repeated mechanically. "Who killed him?" he shouted. He shook the paper before my eyes

you pulled out your pocketbook," said

and then he struck me across the face "Who killed Louis d'Epernay?" he yelled, and Jacqueline screamed in fear.

"I did," I answered after a moment. CHAPTER XVII.

The Little Dagger. Leroux staggered back against the

wall and sfood there, scowling like a devil. It was evident that my answer had been totally unexpected. "Did you know this, madame?" cried

Leroux flercely to Jacqueline.

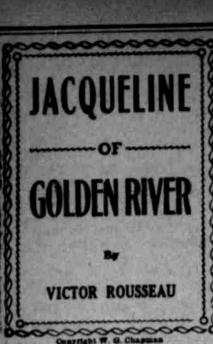
"Yes," she replied. "You lied to shield yourself?" "No, to shield him," she cried. "Because he was my only friend when I was helpless in a strange city. You did not steal my money, did you. Paul?" she added, turning swiftly upon me. "No, you have paid me. You

were keeping it for me." "You lie, d-n you!" yelled Leroux, and he struck her across the mouth as he had struck me.

I writhed in my honds. I pulled the heavy table after me as I tried impotently to crawl toward him, sending the wheel flying and all the papers whirling through the air. I cursed Leroux as blasphemously as he was curstpg Jacqueline.

And at the door was the pale face of Philippe Lacrotx.

(Continued Next Week)



For the sake of-of what I once

"Monsieur!" She Gasped.